

Trouble Shooting

Symptoms	Problem	Solution
Compost is wet and smells bad	Not enough air in the pile	Turn the pile everyday until it dries out and odor goes away.
Compost is dry	Pile is not big enough or water needs to be added	Add material to the pile or add water until it is damp as a sponge.
Compost is not heating up	Lack of nitrogen	Add a nitrogen rich material such as grass clipping, manure or fertilizer.
Rodents are in the pile	Household food waste are in the pile.	Remove any meat or grease and cover any other household waste with yard waste.

Compost Uses

Soil Amendment— compost can be mixed into the soil to add nutrients and organic matter to a planting area or lawn.

Mulching— compost can be spread over the top of the soil 1-3” thick to hold moisture and help reduce weeds in a flower or vegetable bed.

Potting Mix— compost can be used as a component in a home blended potting media to add organic matter and structure.



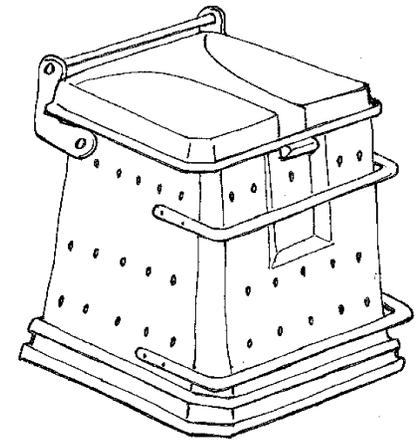
Free residential yard composters (made from reusing old Herbie carts) are available from LFUCG. Just call LexCall at 311, or 859-425-2255 to request one.

The composter can be picked up at the LFUCG Versailles Road Campus, 1306 Versailles Road. Please call LexCall at 311 to make sure they have some on hand.

**Visit our website:
www.lexingtonky.gov/environmental**

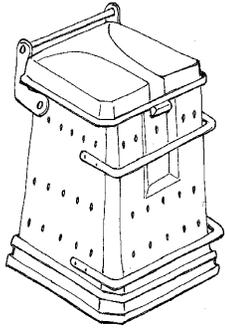
Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service
1140 Red Mile Place
Lexington, KY 40504-1172
Phone: (859) 257-5582
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Composting With A



Recycled Herbie Bin

Home Composting with a Recycled Herbie Bin



Composting is a natural process in which organic material is broken down by a variety of natural organisms creating a wonderful, fertile, soil amendment for garden use. This is one of the best green practices for homeowners as it can significantly reduce landfill use. This information is greatly simplified; for more

detailed composting information visit: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ho/ho75/ho75.pdf>

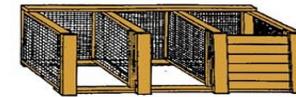
To use your recycled Herbie compost bin just follow these easy steps:

- Place the compost bin in an out of the way part of your yard. If the location is convenient to your garden you will be more likely to use the bin.
- As you garden, add any organic wastes generated to the compost bin. Material will break down faster if it is chopped into small pieces about 2-4" long. Leaves, grass clippings, sod, weeds that have not set seeds, kitchen vegetable wastes, egg shells, coffee grounds, manure (not from cats or dogs), landscape clippings, shredded paper or cardboard all can be used to make compost. Any diseased or insect infested materials should not go into your compost bin. Continue adding materials until your bin is $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

- Keeping the lid closed will help deter animals. Also make sure **never to add eggs, meat or dairy products to the bin** as these will create unpleasant odors and attract animal pests.
- Once the bin is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, lift the compost bin off the pile and relocate it just to the side of the pile. Use a garden fork to move the material into the bin again, this will turn (mix) and aerate the pile.
- After 2-6 weeks the turning process can be repeated to finish the composting process. The volume of the compost will shrink as it breaks down. You may wish to stockpile other materials nearby so you will be ready to refill the bin once the initial batch is completed. If left long enough these piles will begin to compost even outside of the bin. If you generate more yard waste than you want to compost onsite contact the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government for a container for yard waste pick up (Lenny). You may also visit the website above to learn how to build your own larger composting bins.
- If the material in the bin becomes dry throughout you may need to sprinkle a little water on top to moisten the ingredients and speed up the process. The compost should feel damp, not wet.
- Compost starters and fertilizers may start things slightly faster but are not required. A shovel of garden soil can be added to jump start the microbial population.
- Your compost will be 'finished' when it is fine and crumbly like coarse potting soil or fine mulch. You can sift out any larger particles that have not broken down and add



them back to the bin for the next batch. The amount of time required to make compost will vary widely depending upon the materials, the outdoor temperature, and the frequency of turnings. If you are impatient you can speed the process by moving the bin and turning the pile every two weeks.



Types of Compost Bins

55 Gallon Drum– Either a metal or plastic drum with 6-9 rows of holes $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter for aeration works well as a composting bin. To turn the compost, put the lid on and roll it around the yard.

Wood– A 3 chambered bin constructed of wood with small gaps for aeration or wooden frames with wire sides are common. One section is for holding finished compost, while the other two are used to turn the compost back and forth for good aeration.

Wire– Using woven wire that is cut and attached to make a cylinder creates a bin with good aeration that is easy to move. However turning the compost is difficult because the bin only has one chamber, it must be taken apart, moved and refilled.

Buckets– Small amounts of food waste can be put in buckets with lids. Add sawdust to raise the carbon content to make a great mini composting bin.

Worm Boxes– Another way to compost small amounts of food is with the help of some worms. A square box made of wood with small $\frac{1}{4}$ inch slits for aeration and a lid works quite well as a home for these hungry helpers.